

Firearms advisory for nonresident aliens

Federal regulations are now in effect for temporarily importing firearms and ammunition into the United States.

1. Non-resident aliens (*someone who is neither a citizen nor a permanent resident of the United States*) must provide U.S. Customs with a pre-approved U.S. import permit and evidence that they fall into an exemption category (e.g., by providing a valid Alaska hunting license/permit) before they will be allowed to import firearms or ammunition.
2. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) issues the required import permit. This permit can be obtained by completing a form (Form 6 Part 1, Application and Permit for Importation of Firearms, Ammunition and Implements of War), which is available from the ATF or on the ATF Web site. It can take 6 to 12 weeks to process the application so the permit should be applied for well in advance.
3. The application form for the import permit must be accompanied by a copy of an Alaska (or other U.S.) hunting license.

Contact Information:

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Firearms and Explosives Imports Branch
Telephone: (202) 927-8320
Web site: www.atf.treas.gov/

Canadian firearms restrictions

Canadian laws significantly restrict transportation of firearms through Canada

Canadian transport policy for firearms requires prior planning. To transport a regular rifle and/or shotgun you must pay a \$50 fee (Canadian) and fill out a firearms declaration form. You may now receive an "Authorization to Transport" (ATT) permit to transport a handgun through Canada. This permit must be authorized BEFORE you arrive at the border. If not, your handgun may be confiscated. The handgun cannot have a barrel length shorter than 4 1/4 inches (105 mm), cannot fire a .25 or .32 caliber bullet and may need to be in a locked case. An ATT permit is free, however you will still have to register and pay the \$50 fee. For more information or to order a copy of the Firearms Act, its regulations, application forms and other Canadian Firearms Centre publications, contact them at:

1-800-731-4000 (Ext. 9026)

or www.cfc.gc.ca

e-mail: canadian.firearms@justice.gc.ca

Avian (Bird) Flu in Alaska

Avian influenza strains are common in wild bird populations, but usually affect small numbers of birds and generally do not cause obvious signs of infection. Few bird viruses are able to infect humans, but influenza viruses are able to adapt and change over time. The highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza (HPAI H5N1) that developed in Asian domestic poultry in recent years has caused a small number of infections in humans in close contact with infected poultry or poultry products. This virus very rarely moves to or between humans, and has rarely, if ever, been transmitted to humans from wild birds. Sampling since 1989 has not shown HPAI H5N1 in Alaska.

Because HPAI H5N1 has spread throughout much of Asia, Europe, and Africa since 1997 and continues to erupt, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Geological Survey (USGS), Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), and public health agencies have formed a partnership to conduct surveillance for the occurrence of this virus in wild birds in Alaska. An ambitious 2006 sampling program is focused on species that arrive from or visit Asia, with a goal of 15,000 samples taken from live birds and hunter-harvested birds. This work complements ongoing research on avian influenza by the University of Alaska. The intensive multi agency sampling program is part of surveillance efforts throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Prevent exposure to diseases while hunting:

It is possible that HPAI H5N1 and other diseases may be acquired from contact with infected wild birds.

Hunters should take these precautions:

1. Do not handle birds that are obviously sick or birds found dead.
2. Keep your game birds cool, clean, and dry.
3. Avoid contact between hands and mouth or eyes—don't eat, drink, or smoke while cleaning your birds.
4. Use rubber gloves when cleaning game.
5. Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol wipes after dressing birds.
6. Clean all tools and surfaces immediately afterward; use hot soapy water, then disinfect with a 10% chlorine bleach solution.
7. Cook game meat thoroughly (165°F) to kill disease organisms and parasites.

If you encounter groups of sick or dead birds in the field, particularly waterfowl and shorebirds, please promptly report information to the Alaska Interagency Bird Disease hotline at 866 5BRDFLU;(866 527-3358).

Updated information is available online by visiting <http://www.avianflu.alaska.gov>